

**TULARE COUNTY WATER COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
August 10, 2015**

Members Present:

Allen Ishida, Board Representative and Chairman
Dale Brogan, District 2 Appointee
Mark Larsen, District 3 Appointee
Richard L. Schafer, District 5 Appointee
Chris Kapheim, District 4 Appointee
Susana De Anda, At-Large Appointee
Mike Ennis, Board Alternate Representative
Paul Boyer, District 1 Appointee
Rudy Mendoza, TCAG Representative
Roger Everett, At-Large Appointee

Members Absent:

Larry Peltzer, At-Large Appointee

Staff Present:

Julieta Martinez, Tulare County Board of Supervisors
Denise England, Water Resources Program Manager
Marit Erickson, County Counsel

Members of the Public Present:

Bob Irvine
Michael Tharp
W. Dale Sally
Bill Samarin
Richard Garcia
Michael Hickey
Kim Loeb
Shane Smith

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:02pm.

2. Public Comment Period

Bill Samarin addressed the Commission in regards to the well ordinance discussion held on June 8th. He asked them to consider the financial burden a well moratorium would put on many farmers and constituents. He shared that after next year, he will not have a source of water suitable to maintain his orchard. He will have to construct a new well to irrigated trees for decades to come. If they are not permitted to construct, their trees will die and they will lose their life savings. It would be emotionally and financially devastating to his family.

3. Approval of June 8, 2015 minutes

Motion by Commissioner Larsen, second by Commissioner Schafer. Motion approved.

4. Presentation by Bobby Kamansky on the progress of the Southern Sierra Regional Water Management Group (SSRWMG).

Mr. Kamansky shared that it has been five years since the last update. He wanted to give a brief presentation. He displayed a colorful map showing various vegetation zones. There are some

very distinct issues regarding ownership, management. They have completed an integrated regional management plan. It took almost 6 years to put it together. They worked with Provost & Pritchard Consulting on the project. There is a website where one can find a detailed and thorough analysis or plan (IRWMP). The link is as follows <http://www.southernsierrarwm.org/southern-sierra-irwm-plan.html>.

The plan is great but they have found challenges over the last several months. There was thorough research done regarding the types of grants that could be applied for to implement the plan. The SSRWMG was able to fund some of their process. T

They also have some watershed action plans. One of the goals is to have a watershed emphasis. Sustainability is another goal on the list. There are about 30 organization that participate in the process but at many different levels.

The next steps would be to integrate this plan into the Three Rivers community plan and look for other hamlets to do studies in. Looking down the road they would like to be in a position where they could run their process and implement projects. It is a little difficult to be sustainable for a group like theirs

The group has a really hard time trying to sync their collaborative process in the meetings they have. They are pretty time intensive. The timeline has to be extended and they need to be considering grants a year and a half out in order to be able to implement the work. The challenge with grant writers is something they've known about. One way to go around it is to write the grants themselves but that is very difficult, time consuming, and expensive. The goal in that regards is to build sustainability to garner fund through sponsorships.

Commissioner Schafer asked if there was a preliminary draft of this study.

Mr. Kamansky shared that he has not seem a draft or full report but believes it is near completion. Discussion followed.

Commissioner De Anda thanked Bobby for his presentation. She made one comment regarding their plans and encouraged them to keep these plan up to date. During the drought, it is important everything is up to date and fits the current needs.

5. Approve the addition of Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee members to the Tulare County Water Commission Groundwater Subcommittee. (Discussion and Action Item)

Edward Needham, Chair of the Agriculture Advisory Committee (APAC) was asked to speak on the subject. He had received a copy of the recommendation made by the Groundwater subcommittee at the June 8th Water Commission meeting and felt concerned with the direction they were taking in regards to a new well ordinance. He offered the idea of a joint subcommittee to sit down and discuss an update to the current well ordinance.

Commissioner Schafer asked if the APAC would appoint four member since Water Commission appointed four of their own members already.

Motion by Commissioner Larsen subject to County Counsel approval, second by Commissioner Brogan. Motion approved.

6. Update on the Well Permitting Ordinance recommendations brought forward by the Groundwater Subcommittee on June 8, 2015.

Chairman Ishida stated that the reason he had Mr. Samarian speak first during public comment

was because his issue is an example of other issues out there that don't quite fit the idea of the recommendations that were brought forward. One size doesn't fit all, which is something that needs to be considered. The Board of Supervisors is looking very hard at the conversion of non-irrigated land to irrigated lands. They are getting a lot of conversion of non-irrigated to irrigated. That is a concern. They will be addressing that issue in a relatively short period of time.

Commissioner Schafer commented on the matter stating that there would have to be special conditions that would need to be evaluated on a case by case basis. He stated that Mr. Samarian's position would be one of those cases.

Chairman Ishida asked that the recommendation go back to the Joint Subcommittee and be looked over with the newly integrated members from the Agricultural Advisory Committee.

7. Subcommittee Reports

None at this time.

8. Staff Reports

- a. Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
 - i. Implementation in Tulare County

Denise England attended a meeting for the Larger Kings Sub Basin. It is not clear what will happen. It is clear that there are several fractions within that sub basin. There was a facilitation meeting with the Kaweah Basin. Facilitators concluded their interviews with agencies eligible to become GSA's. IN the meantime, what is being called the Mid-Kaweah Group has moved forward. Both cities, Visalia and Tulare, have signed on to the JPA. Tulare Irrigation District is expected to approve the JPA this week.

The remainder of the basin is moving forward. The next meeting is on August 24th at 1:00 pm at the County Administrative Building. The Tule Basin group held a meeting last week at the Lower Tule Irrigation District. There will be more discussion next month.

Denise England is working to put together a workshop on September 1st in the afternoon to provide an update on the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act to the Board of Supervisors.

Chairman Ishida mentioned that the reason the Board of Supervisors is going to have a workshop is to bring other Supervisors up to speed. From his perspective, the County is going to have to take a very definitive leadership role in process, especially in white areas. The County does have jurisdiction. Even then, if white areas do not participate, the State of California will be the entity they respond to. He believes it is an extremely important issue and the County needs to seriously look at its role. Discussion followed.

9. Commissioners Comments

Chairman Ishida mentioned that he, along with Supervisor Worthley, has been attending meetings in Fresno in regards to forming a JPA to pursue Prop One funding for water storage. He feels there should be Friant Water users involved in the process. Apparently there have been numbers derived in a draft EIR for a feasibility study for Temperance Flat. He had not heard of those numbers before Friday. He also mentioned there is a California Water Commission meeting this evening in Bakersfield to discuss the Prop One funding.

Commissioner Brogan shared a reminder that Friant contractors are now represented by three separate entities, South Valley Water Association, Friant Water Authority, and Friant North

Authority. One of the three, SVWA, has this on their agenda to discuss at its next meeting.

Commissioner De Anda informed the Commission that a summit of all key stakeholder was held at the Orosi Memorial building. Over 80 people were in attendance. The first working group will meet on August 22nd at the Orosi Unified School District Office.

Commissioner Schafer provided a report at the Drought Task Force meeting that he thought might be of interest to the Water Commission. Discussion followed.

10. Next meeting – Monday, September 14, 2015, 3:00 p.m. – Board of Supervisors Chambers

11. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:14pm.